

Chan 14 Feb 68

Big mistake for US since 1963

NLF doesn't hide Hanoi link from its cadres — to borrow prestige of Ho; ~~though~~ they stress independence from Hanoi mainly for benefit of intellectuals and Westerners. Only very sophisticated ones can see Ho as counter-revolutionary; most see him as hero, source of pride.

After D

Ng. Ngoc Binh could have been leader; Tan (Min. of For. Affairs under Ho; suicide in '65).

Dim did seem up comparable to Ho (though less); but after...

"If you have a ^{dictator} monarchy system — like Ho, Dim — you must look closely at the leader. If leader seems average, mediocre, the people demand right to disagree, talk back: Thim, Ky....

Dictator must be respected — honorable life, posthumous, etc. If so, people have little desire to argue, criticize.

Dim Thim — majority regard as average person — they want to argue, criticize. If they are not allowed, the result is apathy.

Thus, to make dictatorship work, need good leader image:

- { a) revolutionary, nationalistic past
- { b) example of respectable private life, honorable.

or, c) democratic, "friendly" accessible leader.

Since 1964, we couldn't offer (A) rings (Ho, Dim) ; yet
people around Ky (etc.) did not let him conform to democratic
model — he accessible ; he tried to behave like an (A) leader,
without qualifications.

Cham:

In 1964, VC issued both coercion and persuasion.

They never could induct men who is converted before being inducted; they only on induct. after induction — there is more of this than before.

[This never converted on, by GVN, Rostov, etc.]

[Trends in induct?]

VC ends up knowing why he is fighting; ARVN/RO cadre etc. prefers to fight on GVN side than VC (pay, power, etc.) but has no sense of cause, purpose.

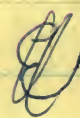
(just "anti-Communism" — "If you put in 2 mill troops, everyone will be very anti-Com — so long as you are here.")

Views of US: "Most intellectuals — profs, offrs, etc. — believe US has detailed, long-range, comprehensive plan for VN: everything that has been happening (catastrophes, etc.) is the unfolding of this plan. They think Cham is too idealistic, distorted — credits US with too good intentions. Cham does believe in US good intentions: interprets events (since 1964) in terms of US inconsistency, incoherence, ignorance, stupidity, lack of concept or plan; they over-rate US on this score.

Erington 53300 Sol Leach, Laid Berry

[Struggle — Jct, assass.,

LE 5,3300



68 street Park ave
East 68 street

Issues:

- US choices in 1957-58 ← ^{Dim}
training, org
 - Mil. training of ARVN
 - Situation in 1960-61
 - US choices in 1961: troops
influence
Dim
politics
- How significant were refusals we asked?

- 1963

Bio

Program for: VN, C. bloc; US; elsewhere

Negate

On

On sac, strat banks:

Although Dim did not fit democratic model C.
now wants, C. thinks strat banks would have worked
eventually: i.e. that faults in program would have been
modified and corrected, eventually: 3-5 years. And would
have beaten Coms.

Budds could have been improved (less violently than in '66)
Thus could have been made to leave.

"If W could have backed principle...

[i.e. C. seems to say: authoritarian system can work
with a Ho or a Dim; but without such a leader, must have
fair system. BUT: was even Dim good enough? System
won't work.]

US should have pressed Diem to let oppositionists into Cabinet;
would have reduced power of Nhu clique:

- a) if ignored, would have resigned,
- b) could not fake elections

("Many different ways to support a leader; doesn't just mean, 'Go ahead, I'll follow you.'")

On mil. preparation:

Maj. Butterfield worked with Chan in Dalat on 4-year cadet course. Chan thought mistake to emphasize conventional org + tactics. Gen. Don, US, decided on this route; had no guerrilla experience. Didn't foresee insurgency; didn't really believe in invasion either, but saw no alternative.

At those days, Americans were unfamiliar, generous; were impressed by promise of resources to develop ARVN (150-l p's for academy);
c) tried to be friendly with Americans.

US troops: Except for Geneva, most VN offs wanted US bases on coast, DMZ, to deter

Insurgency really began late '59 (before that, B.X., H.H., C.O.)
(Before Coms needed time to prepare people psychologically).

C. Thought US troops needed in late-63, early-64; ^{never thought it} not before.
esp. after Dien cong. In retrospect, would have preferred
more RVNAF to US.

C1 US did not know how to influence Dien. Neither Dulles nor
Nalty had any influence, because neither had Washington support;
(L 59-60, Dien wanted to strengthen RF/PF; rejected by Dulles? Willson?)

Dulles right not have succeeded even with Wash support;
Dien too broad, sentimental

US strong stand on Bui Dai crisis was correct, but should have
kept Nalty to handle it — no pagoda raid if Nalty had
stayed; if Lodge had not been sent ~~so late~~ with advance
publicity as "Governor-General."

In 1959-61 US should have:

1) increased RF/PF instead of ARVN. (Dien?)

(Dien pushed ARVN

It would have been good to replace Dien (with Surin)
in 1959-60 (1961 borderline); popular support; VC would not
have gotten so strong. Good for US to support Nov 60 cong: C (in Malaya)

But by 1962-63, too late to displace with Dien.
could not afford to depose Dien:

hoped & expected.

c) VC too strong.

d) Street basket program would have worked, even with
Dien, and wouldn't have worked, by '63.

Collapse in countryside in 1963 due to collapse in village
admin after coup. PC's, DC's, village chiefs (& ARVN) all shifted
(usually to other posts —

[By 1957, essential to replace Dien — to contain VC
without US; By 1963, needed US, with or without Dien;
but by 1961-63, "too late" to get rid of Dien — at least,
unless could (a) keep village chiefs in place, (b) move to democracy.

(Yet after Pagoda raid, Dien was finished. (No raid
if Nolting hadn't left.) Even then, Nolting (not Dodge) backed by
US could have gotten Nhu out, contained Buddhists. Street baskets
would have worked eventually — though not C's ideas — because
DC/PC's views were considered, while later.

No alternative to democracy (since 1963; 1958?), given Com competition,
lack of leadership. US ignorance = inability to take over, pick
leaders.

Who must replace

City vs. countryside. Dien lost city ^{support} after 1961-63, but could have
gotten countryside; after coup, got some city support — not action — but lost
countryside.

A

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Margolis on my paper:

[Crisis was coming eventually; failure of policy was ~~far~~ going to force JFK to reconsider troop decisions, aside from Laos. And then was a deterioration caused by VC, (though this wasn't clear till Taylor visit) — though not enough to be used, in itself, as arg. for US troops. Laos did, in part, motivate VNese + Diem desires for US troops; and it seemed as essential to force JFK's hand: a) by Diem, who wanted commitment in face of non-Comm pressures, and b) by JCS/HcN, who ~~and~~ thought troops needed eventually (and who believed in committing Pres, after Laos, Bay of Pigs, etc.)

But at least as important as Laos was consideration of Laos, etc. (Laos was not main consideration for JCS; ^(see them) perhaps even for Diem)

Tactics failed to get troops out of VFK.

Question: Would JFK have done even less in fall '61, except for Laos, Laos ^{Diem, JCS} (Pigs, Berlin, etc.). ~~Is~~ No advisors; tougher line on reform; Laos-type attitude?

— Why did JCS press for troops in SVN? Symbolic, confidence in VN; or, commit Pres; or, needed now; or needed later?

Fill.
[1961 — when JFK decided not to send US troops to VN.

Yet did strengthen the commitment: without reform.

(Smaller than Geneva limitation)

— Was VC step-up a factor in "decision point" — or lowered confidence because of Laos?

U

Diem
Ethan thought Com could succeed by manipulating
ignorant non-Com groups — have toughness with internal groups.
(Thought US Ambass. didn't appreciate.)

US-VNese Difficult for sincere VNese to accept the capture of
the US representative, at any level — compared to VNese. US much more
influential if US guidance corresponded to position taken by VNese,
even strong opponents: more confidence & judgment. Moral: good
opportunity to work with NA, in dealing with GVN; otherwise, will regard
ideas as "purely American" — ignorant, or US-imitation. "Complex of
resisting American ideas" also for fear of being accused of being under
US influence.")

Diem. Dictatorship system could work under Diem
(better than successors), well enough for development, etc.
But could not compete with Ho Chi Minh, Comm dictatorship;
stronger ^{dictatorship} will win. [Ho better organized; better
disciplined; supported by strong allies, where Diem's dictatorship
could not be accepted by US, West.]

Only a democratic approach could work in combating
Ho's system (though elsewhere, strong enough leader & system might
succeed vs. Com.)

Diem did need to destroy armed strength of sects; but afterwards,
should have helped them regain confidence and dignity, participate.

(If he had let sects remain armed — something like Chieu Dai,
An Bang, I Corps today — this would have worked us. VC

